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Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4528th meeting

Tuesday, 7 May 2002, 1.45 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Mahbubani	(Singapore)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Raytchev
	Cameroon	Mr. Ngoubeyou
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	Colombia	Mr. Valdivieso
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Guinea	Mr. Cheick Ahmed Tidiane Camara
	Ireland	Mr. Ryan
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Norway	Ms. Johnson
	Russian Federation	Mr. Karev
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eldon
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

Children and armed conflict.

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02-37035 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 1.55 p.m.

Representation and welcome to Ministers

The President: At the outset, I should like to acknowledge and welcome the presence at the Council table of the distinguished Minister of State in charge of External Relations of Cameroon, His Excellency Mr. François-Xavier Ngoubeyou. I believe he is going to join us later.

I should also like to acknowledge and welcome the presence at the Council table of the distinguished Minister for International Development of Norway, Her Excellency Ms. Hilde F. Johnson, accompanied by the Minister of Children and Family Affairs of Norway, Her Excellency Ms. Laila Daavoy.

I should also like to acknowledge and welcome the presence at the Council table of the distinguished National Coordinator for the Mexican Child and Family Protection System, Her Excellency Ms. Ana Teresa Aranda.

And while I am issuing special words of welcome, I also want to acknowledge the presence of young people in the Chamber, including young students from the Collegiate and Sacred Heart Schools in New York City, where my children happen to be studying.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Children and armed conflict

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Olara Otunnu, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

It is so decided.

I invite the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Ms. Graça Machel, former Minister of Education for Mozambique, former Independent Expert of the Secretary-General on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children, and author of the recent book entitled "The Impact of War on Children" — which I highly recommend to everyone here.

It is so decided.

I invite Ms. Graça Machel to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mrs. Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

It is so decided.

I invite the Executive Director of UNICEF, accompanied by the three children who will be speaking to us — D. Wilmot Wungko, Eliza Kantardzic and José Cabral — to take their seats at the Council table. On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to the children.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I shall now make some opening remarks on behalf of the Security Council.

On behalf of the Security Council, I am pleased to welcome Ms. Graça Machel, former Minister of Education of Mozambique and former Independent Expert on children and armed conflict; Mrs. Carol Bellamy, Executive Director of UNICEF; and Mr. Olara Otunnu, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, as well as the three child representatives: Wilmot from Liberia, Eliza from Bosnia and Herzegovina, and José from East Timor.

The Security Council is pleased to hold this meeting in order to demonstrate support for the General Assembly special session on children. Indeed,

we had planned to hold this meeting last September, under the presidency of France, but 11 September caused its postponement. At the same time, this session provides a valuable opportunity for the Security Council to reaffirm its collective and firm commitment to the protection of children in situations of armed conflict, which has become progressively mainstreamed into the work of the Council.

In the early years of the history of the United Nations, there were a number of international instruments containing important child-specific provisions, such as the 1949 Geneva Convention and Additional Protocols of 1977 and the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The real breakthrough came after Ms. Graça Machel's groundbreaking study, issued in 1996 pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/157 of 20 December 1993. The study suggested a comprehensive agenda for action by the international community to enhance the protection of children during armed conflict.

She also recommended that

> "the Council should therefore be kept continually and fully aware of humanitarian concerns, including child-specific concerns, in its actions to resolve conflicts, to keep or to enforce peace or to implement peace agreements." *(A/51/306, para. 282)*

A year later, Mr. Olara Otunnu was appointed Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, and both his Office and UNICEF have worked hard to push this issue.

In 1998, the Security Council held an open debate on the subject and issued a landmark presidential statement. This was followed by three significant Security Council resolutions — 1261 (1999), 1314 (2000) and, most recently, 1379 (2001).

Resolution 1379 (2001) lays out most comprehensively the Council's extensive support and guidance for international efforts to protect and assist children in armed conflict. Notably, the resolution identifies concrete steps to be taken by States, non-States and international actors to protect children affected by armed conflict.

Another recent development on the subject was the statement by the President of the Security Council before the Executive Board of UNICEF in December 2001. In his statement, the then Council President referred to the situation of children affected by armed conflict in West Africa and highlighted this as an ideal case for cooperation between the Security Council and UNICEF, and proposed the creation of a joint mechanism to make this cooperation possible.

More recently, in March 2002, as part of the aide-mémoire on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, the Council drew attention to the importance of addressing the specific assistance and protection needs of children, including, inter alia, prevention of the recruitment of child soldiers in violation of international law, family reunification of displaced children and the provision of a secure channel for child refugees and internally displaced children, who are especially vulnerable to exploitation and to abuse.

In recent years, the Council has also included child- protection provisions in several specific Security Council resolutions, including 1260 (1999) on Sierra Leone and resolution 1279 (1999) on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In addition, the Council is also engaged, through Arria-formula meetings, with non-governmental organizations, which often provide valuable insights and perspectives into the problem of children in armed conflict.

At the same time, through various Security Council missions to the field — and, I am sure, including Ambassador Levitte's recent mission, which he has just returned from this morning — Council members have also had to opportunity to witness firsthand the conditions of children in conflict and post-conflict situations around the world.

In a similar vein, members will recall the moving statement made by 14-year-old Alhaji Babah Sawaneh from Sierra Leone, who related his experiences here in this Chamber last November. We believe that the personal testimonies of the three young persons in our meeting today will help us better to understand what children go through in situations of armed conflict and thus underscore the importance of provisions for children under such circumstances.

We hope that today's meeting will make a further contribution towards raising awareness of a major concern of the international community.

That ends my opening remarks as President of the Security Council.

I shall now give the floor to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Olara Otunnu.

Mr. Otunnu: On behalf of children affected by war all over the world, I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this particular meeting devoted to the protection of children in war situations. I also thank the Ambassador of France for having set in motion this initiative last September.

It is a particular honour to have in our midst Ms. Graça Machel of Mozambique and South Africa. Her groundbreaking work, commitment and passion laid the foundation for this work. We are watering the plant, the seed of which she planted.

How wonderful to have young people at this table. The door has finally been opened to those who are most affected by conflict.

When we adults wage war, the highest price is paid by children. They are killed and maimed, orphans and refugees, traumatized and sexually abused, denied education and exposed to malnutrition and, of course, exploited as child soldiers.

I greatly appreciate the commitment of the Security Council and its work over the past several years to incorporate the protection and well-being of children into the peace and security agenda of the United Nations.

With regard to the efforts under way today to mainstream this activity, what do I ask of the Council in particular? I ask that, working together with you, we should ensure that the protection and well-being of children is included in negotiations to end conflict and in every peace accord in a systematic way; that the protection of children becomes truly part of the raison d'être of peace operations, expressed in mandates and reports to the Security Council; that effective training and codes of conduct be provided for peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel, so that they, by their conduct, might set the best example for the respect and protection of children and women. I ask that child protection advisers be included on the staff of peacekeeping missions to strengthen the capacity for advocacy and protection on the ground; that we actively promote the participation of young people themselves in peace processes, so that they thereby become actors and advocates on their own behalf and on behalf of other children — that is why I am so glad that the young people are here today; and that the demobilization and rehabilitation of former child-soldiers are an important component of any disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme on the ground.

As for countries that are emerging from conflict, we ask that the rehabilitation and well-being of children should be a centrepiece of any reconstruction, healing and rebuilding programme, and that this be expressed as a matter of urgency in policy-making, priority-setting and, above all, in resource allocation for the benefit of children and young people. We can already point to this commitment today in Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, the Balkans and, we hope, in Angola.

Finally, I ask the Security Council to spare no effort to ensure that the wonderful and very impressive norms, rules, obligations and commitments, including Security Council resolutions, are translated into reality on the ground — reality that can provide protection to children and women exposed to war. This is the best gift we could give to the children who are here with us this afternoon and who, on behalf of millions of other children around the globe, will spread the good news emerging from the Council's deliberations this afternoon.

The President: I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict for his statement. I am confident that his appeal has been heard by all members here.

I now give the floor to Ms. Graça Machel.

Ms. Machel: Thank you, Mr. President, for having invited me to attend this meeting of the Security Council. It is a measure of the progress that we have made in moving children to the centre of the international peace and security agenda that the meeting today is the second Security Council meeting in the past few months to focus on children and armed conflict. In a historic moment last November, the Council invited a young person to address a meeting.

Today, as the General Assembly prepares for its first-ever special session specifically on children, the Security Council is enabling children themselves to interact directly with one of the most important organs of the international community. In addition, in the past few months and years the Council has held discussions and adopted significant resolutions aimed at promoting

the protection of children and women in situations of armed conflict.

Placing children at the centre of political agendas at the highest levels of the international community is an important shift in our attempt to promote the well-being of the world's children. Other encouraging developments since the 1996 United Nations report on the impact of armed conflict on children was presented to the General Assembly include the introduction of the Ottawa Convention against landmines and the subsequent destruction of millions of stockpiled landmines; the strengthening of international legislative frameworks, including the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict; the introduction and strengthening of child protection mandates in peacekeeping missions; and the appointment of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

Yet there is so much more to do. In too many countries throughout the world, war continues to tear apart children's lives. The prevention of conflict is the primary mandate of the Security Council — indeed, of the United Nations. We know that the best way to protect children in armed conflict is to prevent such conflict from beginning. It is essential that the Security Council increase its efforts to develop and implement mechanisms that enforce its decisions and guidelines on the prevention of conflict. Otherwise, the cycle of conflict will never end and millions of children will continue to die from preventable diseases, continue to be forced from their homes and continue to be maimed, tortured and killed.

The implementation of the measures promoted in General Assembly and Security Council resolutions is slow at best, and the improvements we have been pushing for are still only intermittently and dimly reflected in the everyday lives of children. Six years after the original United Nations report highlighted the dangers of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation for children caught up in armed conflict, we are still only just beginning to implement effective protection measures, as highlighted by the recent distressing reports coming out of Sierra Leone.

We can point with pride to the demobilization of 3,500 child soldiers in southern Sudan last year — the result of the tireless work of the United Nations Children's Fund, several non-governmental organizations and concerned Governments. Yet children in as many as 85 countries continue to live with the reality of abduction and forced recruitment into military groups. Even as we meet today, the might of the international community seems unable to stop the criminal situation in which tens of thousands of children from northern Uganda are being abducted and forced into military and sexual slavery — a situation that has continued for a period of more than a decade. In refugee camps throughout the world, education remains out of the reach of large numbers of children, instead of being the protective, guiding and empowering force that it has the potential to be.

Every day that a child lives in fear or pain or is in danger from the violence of war is another day on which we have not done enough. As the Security Council of the United Nations, you are in a stronger position than most to ensure the protection of children. Monitoring of the implementation of Security Council resolutions on children and armed conflict must be strengthened.

When you see — and you will — that implementation is too slow or ineffective, please use your power to promote new measures to admonish those who break international law or fail to carry out your initiatives and, when necessary, to instigate disciplinary measures to force Governments, United Nations agencies and international organizations into better and more urgent action to prevent conflicts in order to protect children.

The Security Council is to be commended for its vision of and commitment to social justice, which has moved it to invite children to address this meeting. I hope that hearing from the people most directly affected by conflict will be a regular occurrence in this important forum. Listening to their stories, their questions and their concerns will surely motivate us to act more urgently to prevent conflicts and to protect children. There can be few catalysts that will more effectively shatter the political inertia that has allowed armed conflict to ruin the lives of millions.

The President: I thank Ms. Graça Machel for her statement and the kind words she addressed to me. I would also like to thank her for the tremendous work that she has done in this field.

Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I should also like to acknowledge and welcome the

presence of Mrs. Mariama Aribot, the Minister for Social Affairs of Guinea.

I now give the floor to Ms. Carol Bellamy, the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund.

Ms. Bellamy: As we speak, leaders from every corner of the world are gathering in this House to reaffirm their obligations to promote the rights of every boy and every girl and commit themselves to creating a world fit for children. It is an occasion at which we seek a global consensus to mobilize resources and political will to promote the survival and health of every child, to assure the right of basic quality education, assistance in combating HIV/AIDS and protection from harm and exploitation.

I commend the Council for its role in strengthening the protection of children in conflict situations. Indeed, I would report that the draft outcome document has drawn on the Council's exemplary work in this area. Let me also echo the comments of my colleague Olara Otunnu in thanking you, Sir, for presiding over this meeting and calling this meeting, building on the work of the French presidency from last September.

I would also like to pay my tribute to my fellow speakers, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Olara Otunnu, for his tireless advocacy and Madame Graça Machel for her wonderful, exemplary leadership in placing this vital issue on the international agenda.

Let me also acknowledge the critical work and effort of numerous international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs), some of which are present in the audience today. We at the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) welcome the Council's engagement with NGOs. It is only through strong partnership that UNICEF is able to advance policies and programmes and strategies to strengthen the protection of children in situations of armed conflict.

We recently supported, with other United Nations agencies, the Afghan Interim Administration in conducting the largest-ever back-to-school programme for boys and girls in Afghanistan. We will continue to invest in education, in particular education for girls, as a means of ensuring the long-term well-being and sustainable protection of the rights of war-affected children. Education also protects children from recruitment as soldiers and helps them reintegrate themselves into their communities after demobilization.

In this connection we will continue our efforts to support the demobilization and reintegration of child soldiers in countries such as Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Colombia and, as was mentioned before, the Sudan.

One of the biggest challenges in conflict situations continues to be the difficulty of ensuring children's full and unhindered access to essential services. In an effort to promote access to children in conflict situations, the International Football Association (FIFA) and UNICEF will urge all parties to conflicts to observe days of immunization during the 2002 World Cup. These days of immunization will build on the experience of the long-supported and highly successful "days of tranquillity". Further, we hope that football — indeed sports generally — will help these children make a start in reclaiming their childhood.

Children, especially girls, are extremely vulnerable to abuse, sexual violence and rape perpetrated during armed conflicts. The allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation against refugee and internally displaced children by humanitarian workers in West Africa are of great concern to us. UNICEF remains unwaveringly committed to ensuring the highest standards of conduct for our staff, to improving our accountability to the beneficiaries of humanitarian assistance and to ensuring that humanitarian assistance is provided in a manner that protects children and prevents sexual exploitation and abuse.

In giving Wilmot, Eliza and José an opportunity to contribute to its meeting today, the Security Council has again set a high standard for leadership. The experiences of these young people remind us of the daunting challenges that still lie ahead.

In conclusion, it is my pleasure to introduce the young people that the Security Council has so kindly invited to address it today. Wilmot Wungko is 16 years old and is from Liberia, where he works actively with radio programmes and child-rights networking. Eliza Kantardzic is 17 years old, and she is from Bosnia. She works as a volunteer with refugee children. José Cabral is 18 years old. He comes from East Timor. He works through a local NGO and the Catholic Church to assist

children living on the street. All three of them are delegates to the almost 400-person Children's Forum that is now taking place. I know that they are keen to share their thoughts with the Security Council.

The President: I thank the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund for her statement and for the kind compliments she paid to Council members, including especially those paid to the French presidency for initiating this idea.

Before giving the floor to the next speaker, I should like to acknowledge and welcome the presence at the Council table of the distinguished Minister of State in charge of external relations of Cameroon, His Excellency Mr. François-Xavier Ngoubeyou.

We shall now hear probably the three most important voices in the debate this afternoon. I now give the floor to the young man Wilmot.

Wilmot Wungko: My name is Wilmot, from Liberia. I am 16 years old. At age five, I fled from Liberia with my mother to Sierra Leone. I was too young at the time to really understand what was happening. I heard the sounds of guns. I saw people running. I saw people shooting. I saw people being killed. I saw people dying. People as young as I was were dying. On two occasions, I saw a man being killed because of his tribe. Another man was slaughtered right in front of our family. I could not stand the sight and hid in my mother's arms.

I saw schools and buildings destroyed. I saw families like mine, in the thousands, leave everything behind and run. I was later told that a war was going on. That was 11 years ago, when the war had just began.

Today, as I speak, the children of Liberia are suffering again from war. We do not have good education because of war. We are malnourished because of war. There are many reports that children are being recruited. We are dying because of war.

Our hopes and dreams for the future are bleak. The cry of the Liberian children is for peace. We, as children ourselves, are involved in trying to put an end to the war. I am working with an all-children television programme, Kiddies' Corner, that discusses the plight of children along with issues affecting our well-being and the development of our fullest potential. Another all-children radio programme, C'est la Vie, run by children themselves, has been effective in sending out the message of peace across the country. These are things that children in Liberia have been doing to find a way for peace.

Other organizations, like the Children's Assistance Program, provide support for war-affected children. Don Bosco Homes provide homes for street children. Children against Violence has provided shelter and education for these kids. The Young Men's Christian Association provides recreational activities. But none of this will mean anything if the war does not stop.

The children of Liberia appeal to the Security Council of the United Nations to do everything possible to stop the fighting in Liberia. We are experiencing war again in Liberia and want it to end now. We are dying every day. Our human rights are being abused every day. These human rights abuses, including the recruitment of children, will continue unless the war is brought to an end. Please help stop the war for the sake of the children. We know that it is your responsibility to promote world peace. Please do not forget Liberia now. Help save the lives of the Liberian children.

I thank you for this opportunity today.

The President: I thank Wilmot for conveying to us the appeal on behalf of the children of Liberia.

I now give the floor to Eliza.

Eliza Kantardzic: My name is Eliza. I am 17 years old and I come from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

War; it sounds horrible and it is very hard to describe how awful it is when you actually live through one. Your whole world falls apart. Everything that you know disappears. The only thing you can see is fear and death. You feel trapped in every way. You ask questions but there are no answers. You are seven years old and your dad is not home for months. He comes for a few days and then he goes away again. And the only thing that you know is that he might never come back. Complete darkness is everywhere.

This horror hits everybody. If you are lucky enough you will not lose everything. Sometimes whole families were split up and nobody knew for months, and even years, if their parents or children or sisters or brothers were alive. There was no way to find them.

I was one of the lucky people. My family is alive. I know where they are. But I am surrounded by people

who are refugees. They came to my town. But you do not look at them as refugees. They are new friends, that is how you see them. Some of them are my best friends at the moment. They came to school, and school is very important for us. It is the only thing to do, when war is going on, to try to forget.

I am a member of a youth centre in Banja Luka. In that centre there is a group of young people, and we work on the implementation of children's rights. We are trying to help the refugees — to help them fit in. Being a friend to someone is the best thing you can do. You do not have to be a member of a youth centre to do something like that.

But through a group we do things together. For example, we make crafts and sell them. With that money we can buy some candies and toys, which we then give to orphans and refugee children. It is a small thing, but it means a lot to them. We are also doing workshops in the schools. Through the workshops the children get to know what their rights are, like the right to live, the right to have a home and an education, to participate, and the right to play. The more they are aware of what they can do and what they have a right to do, the more things will be done. Together we can do it.

When you are in a group and that group is made up of different people with different experiences, it helps to get some ideas. That kind of a group is here at the Children's Forum at the United Nations. The main thing I want to do here is to learn from the others here, the children. That is the way I will get the knowledge I need, and I will use it when I go home and share it with others to make some progress.

But we also need your help. The best thing you can do is to stop war, to prevent it. That is the only way to avoid the consequences and everything that war brings. And that is something that the Council has the power to do. The real question is: Is that power used? You are making decisions here that affect whole nations. That is a fact. I hope that you will remember my words when you get the opportunity to make another decision that could prevent and stop war.

Finally, I have brought a message with me from all the children at the Children's Forum:

> "War and politics have always been an adult's game, but children have always been the losers."

The President: I thank Eliza for the appeal she has made to the Council.

I now give the floor to José.

José Cabral: My name is José. I was born and brought up in East Timor. I am sure that many of you are quite familiar with our recent history. I would like to use my short time with you today to explain my own part in that history, and also some things that I hope we can learn from that.

I think and I think again and try to look for the answer in my past experience to the war in my beloved country, East Timor, during September 1999. I was at my school at that time. The directors of my school, myself and 18 of my friends took care of many people who came to shelter at my school, Saint Joseph College High School. There were about 4,000 refugees.

We saw that everyone around us was afraid, and we tried to do the best for the refugees. It was very strange, and it seemed terrible, when we found there was no child playing, there was no singing, there was only silence or guns. We began to play the guitar and to sing together to help us forget.

Today in East Timor I am a journalist at my school. I have learned so many things from talking to children, especially street children. There are still many children with no opportunity to get an education. Some of them spend their time on the street selling newspapers, compact discs and other things to get money. Some children just put out their hands to ask for money. The money that they get may be used to pay for their school — or they may give it to their parents — but some of them are forced to give the money to those people who threaten them on the streets.

The children do not know anything about war, but they are the victims of war. And even though it is over, some of these children still have to face violence because of things that they were never involved in. Most of the children around the world were born to give their smile, which brings happiness. But many of them were also born only to see and to face the suffering given to them by those who create war.

On 20 May 2002, East Timor will celebrate independence. It will stand on its own for the first time in over 500 years — a great day for the East Timorese to start a new life and to rebuild our country, which had been burnt down. When East Timor joins the United

Nations this month, the Convention on the Rights of the Child will be the first convention ratified by the new Government. I hope that children's rights will be given attention by the Government and by everyone who is responsible for children.

For the future of Timor, we want a Timor that is clean, beautiful and shiny and where every person's dignity and human rights are respected — not a Timor that is dirty, rough and hypocritical. East Timorese children, including the children living on the streets, have dreams to become doctors, engineers, President, but they do not have the opportunity to get an education to reach for their dreams. What we need from you is your help to keep our peace and unity so that all children in East Timor can get an education and live in a peaceful country. No more war.

I realize that I am very lucky to have this chance today to represent children, not only from East Timor, but also from Kosovo, Bosnia, Afghanistan and other countries in armed conflict. Because I am here for the special session on children, today is my chance to ask you very powerful people here, on behalf of all children, not just those of East Timor, to please ensure that our rights are respected. I think we have the laws and conventions, but we are not so good at doing what we say. I am sure that, only when children's rights are properly respected and children can grow up in safety and peace, will those children be able to live in peace together, throughout the world, when they are adults. Please give us that chance.

The President: I thank José for making an appeal on behalf not just of the children of East Timor, but also of children in other armed conflicts elsewhere in the world.

My last duty this afternoon is to read out a presidential statement which, following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make:

> "The Security Council, recalling resolutions 1261 (1999), 1314 (2000) and 1379 (2001) on children and armed conflict, expresses its commitment to the protection of children affected by armed conflict as an essential component of its work to promote and maintain international peace and security.
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> "The Security Council expresses its concern at the grave impact of armed conflict in all its various aspects on children and reiterates its strong condemnation of the continued targeting and use of children in armed conflicts, including their abduction, compulsory recruitment, mutilation, forced displacement, sexual exploitation and abuse, and calls on all parties to conflict to desist from such practices immediately.
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> "The Security Council reaffirms its call for the inclusion of provisions for the protection of children, with particular attention to the special needs of girls, in peace negotiations and peace agreements; mandates and reports concerning peacekeeping operations; rehabilitation and peace-building programmes; training programmes for peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel; as well as the inclusion of child protection advisers in peacekeeping and peace-building operations, in accordance with previous resolutions and presidential statements adopted by the Security Council, in particular resolution 1379 (2001).
>
> "The Security Council looks forward to a successful final document concerning the protection of children affected by armed conflict on the occasion of the General Assembly special session on children. The Security Council further reiterates its call to all parties to abide by their obligations, as well as concrete commitments made to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the United Nations Children's Fund and other relevant United Nations bodies, to ensure the protection of children in situations of armed conflict in all its various aspects.
>
> "The Security Council welcomes the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and urges Member States to consider ratification and States parties to fully implement these provisions.
>
> "The Security Council underscores the importance of unhindered humanitarian access for the benefit of children and, in this connection, calls on parties to conflict to make special arrangements to meet the protection and assistance requirements of children, including where appropriate the promotion of 'Days of Immunization'.

"The Security Council will remain actively seized of this matter."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2002/12.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 2.45 p.m.